

assist in covering the cost and has provided a budget to that party and if a second month is necessary, he is willing to do that as well. Mayor Walker asked if the checks written for attorney fees could be separate and they are being done that way. Solicitor Griffiths clarified that attorney fee reimbursement is being requested at the end of the case, so it has to be separate.

ARPA Projects and Expenditures. This is the federal money provided to the state, county and municipalities for COVID relief. Anticipated projects/expenditures include premium pay, swale project, revenue replacement, reimbursement to the capital account, boat ramp lighting and security cameras, upgraded computers, software and server for the administrative side and a server for the police side to enhance cyber security. LED lighting and fencing as well as an operational camera on Water Street are potential projects as well. Other allowable uses include offering grants to local non-profits who suffered loss due to low donations because of COVID. Premium pay is being offered by other municipalities in varied amounts. The municipalities not offering it directly to the employees had to pay time and a half during the declared state of emergency, but can use the ARPA money to repay themselves. The breakdown and calculation of premium pay was reviewed. Mayor Walker commented that the upgraded computers was a must because of the upcoming development. He said he discussed manpower with Chief Wohner and noticed that the part-time police officer only worked one shift in the prior month and is confused as to why he would be offered the premium pay even though he worked during the pandemic, he quit. He said that he did not want to make a motion to get rid of part-time, but Chief Wohner needs to look at that and be able to give an opinion on whether we should have part-time. Chief Wohner clarified that when the officer left, he agreed to stay on to cover shifts until his replacement was found. There is another part-time person on the payroll who has never worked outside of keeping his required training. The two people at straight time is a lot cheaper than a working officer at time and a half. In addition, it is nice that the other officers can take time if and as needed. Back to computers, yes, definitely. The work at the boat ramp, yes. Mayor Walker says he has some expertise in this area. He has no issues with the revenue replacement figure and is very pleased that the capital account can be reimbursed for the sewer pump work. Swale project has to be done. Without them, the streets are being torn up due to water. Commissioner Capriglione asked about the revenue replacement and it is for overall loss, not just specific area. Mayor Walker asked if we get our street signs from the state. Some are purchased from a vendor. He asked that maintenance go around and check to see if any need replacement due to graffiti or just not clear to read. The Ayre/Mary Street residential parking only signs are not being enforced so they should come down. Poles can be left, but signs should come down. Vice Mayor MacDonald asked if the additional security for the police – LED parking lot lighting and fencing – would be taken out of the budget or ARPA. It could be taken care of with ARPA in the 2022 disbursement. Fencing to alleviate cut-through is a good idea. Mayor Walker sees the money appropriated for full-time versus part-time. He does not think we should blow through the money and that there could be projects that would benefit the people in town. He was just offering his own opinion when he talked about not giving salary increases. He does want to keep the employees happy but is not sure the amounts are appropriate for the town. There is \$89,000 in “bonuses” and he did not think the building inspector deserves a Christmas bonus. Town Manager King clarified that these are not Christmas bonuses – it is premium pay for hours worked during the pandemic in which not one employee worked from home. The officers were on the street, the maintenance staff was on the street. The administrative employees were physically in the building every day and while the building had limited access, court was still being held and business was being conducted. Kyle was still doing inspections and that it was not a matter of whether you were full-time or part-time, but everyone was

working. Newport was one of four municipalities that were working and meeting in person. The other municipalities were offered a laptop and were working from home with Zoom meetings and with zero public access. Mayor Walker acknowledged that as he was out there himself as the code enforcement officer and he is asking questions because that is his job. He cannot sit there and let the figures go by. He confirmed that for the last two years, 3% increases were given and then he looks at the \$10,000 and the calculations are nowhere close. This premium pay is a one-time thing that does not cost the taxpayers directly to give them. Mayor Walker thinks it's very generous and has not seen such generosity in 36 years with the City of Wilmington and it seems over the top when there are projects in town that need to be done like the demolition of the garage in the maintenance facility. Town Manager King reminded him that this money could not be used for that and that it can only be used for sewer and water projects, premium pay, COVID response/equipment, non-profit grant opportunities and lost revenue. The town does not offer utilities – no water treatment facility and we are not 100% responsible for the majority of sanitary sewer. If the lines in the industrial park needed to be upgraded or replaced, it could be used for that. There is no health facility in town. After discussion with the mayor, he was not totally on board with that idea and questioned people's motives. He is speaking as one person and thinks they are higher than they should be. Commissioner Capriglione says there should be some type of gift – he has a problem with the officer who quit receiving any money. He wanted to know the new officer was not getting the full amount and it was explained that he was in the academy during some of the time. There was an officer in the military and why would he not get the full amount and would we get in any trouble. The amount does not scare him, but he wants it to be fair. Chief Wohner spoke on the thought and process behind the numbers. The full amount was taken and divided by the number of state of emergency hours (2880) and the hourly figure was then multiplied by the number of hours the two officers actually worked in the town (Savino and Betsch). Savino's hours included his academy time. Commissioner Capriglione is trying to be equitable since pensions will not be supplemented. He suggested adding the \$21,000 to give a 3% increase and subtract that from the overall premium amount. Vice Mayor MacDonald concurred with that idea. There was question of how the funds are to be paid – regular payroll versus checks/1099. There was discussion of a possible 5% of base pay. Commissioner Capriglione wanted to know what the employees thought. There were multiple conversations going on at the table that continued for several minutes. Town Manager King went back to Commissioner Capriglione and advised that if we gave 3% pay increases out of this money for the next two years and the budget was tight, the town would be obligated to continue paying those salaries. He said that he hoped there would be development and growth. Mayor Walker said that the number was good with the other commissioners, it would pass and reiterated about being locked in with the salaries with a percentage increase. The way it's been presented, it is cleaner. There are many different ways to look at it. The money is not coming out of the town budget. He asked Commissioner Stagliano his thoughts and he said that it would good to ask the employees present what they thought. Commissioner Martinez asked what would be more beneficial – 1099 versus payroll. Commissioner Capriglione stated again that his concern was lack of pension contributions on that money. Chief Wohner said that realistically, the only person it would affect was himself as pension is based on the three highest years of pay. The other men are young enough and will have at least 20 years to make up for the lack of the 3% for the next year or two and it will not affect their pension. The base numbers are good. Vice Mayor MacDonald is on board with the premium pay and is thinking of many different scenarios. The other projects are not concrete and she had concerns we would not have enough money. There was discussion of a special meeting and having a workshop with the employees.

Patrolman Jones said that most officers are thinking about their pensions. There was more discussion about how it was going to work whether it be half now, half next year with an increase or without. Solicitor Griffiths said he was backtracking his position of providing the town manager with an estimate of what will be spent on legal expenses and he is not going to do that because he did not think it was appropriate and did not appreciate the question coming from the person who is litigating against the town. Commissioner Capriglione said it was not intended that way, but from a budgetary standpoint. Solicitor Griffiths said that it was asked of him how much he intended to spend to fight him. Mayor Walker said it was not the place or time to have that discussion. It's a court matter not to be discussed at the table. The final figure regarding premium pay was 100% minus the 3%, so there is no need for a special meeting and it can be paid out by the 15th.

Commissioner Capriglione made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Stagliano seconded. All ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.